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ABSTRACT

This newsletter reports on a project concerning the linguistic development of immigrant children in Sweden in upper secondary school. The project is part of an extensive program on immigrant children's schooling and attainment of bilingualism conducted by the SPRINS Group at the University of Goteborg (SPRINS in Swedish represents "linguistic development of immigrant children in Sweden"). The aim of the project is to gather information on the content and quality of teaching the native language and Swedish as a second language. A student survey begun in 1980 laid the foundations of comprehensive documentation concerning the educational progress of individual immigrant pupils from the senior level of compulsory school to higher education or the employment sector. Individualized pupil followup is being planned. Analyses of reports and experience have shown that students need to be taught Swedish based on their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and on their individual language learning situations. For most students, this is best accomplished through deliberate teaching of a separate subject. The theory of Swedish as a second language is part of teacher education, but the methodological aspect of the subject has hardly begun to be addressed. The SPRINS Group projects include seminars for experienced teachers of Swedish as a second language and nationwide conferences with researchers and practitioners. Research projects, both present and planned, focus on elective options for pupils, immigrants' vocabularies, the environment of the upper secondary school, and bilingual instruction of Finnish students at the senior level. (CG)

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Newsletter

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1985 FIELD - TOPIC 1985:9

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Immigrant pupils
Bilingualism
Integrated language programme
Home language (mother tongue)
Swedish as a second language
English
Upper secondary school

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Current project

TITLE OF PROJECT: IMMIGRANT PUPILS AT THE SENIOR LEVEL OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AND IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Under the SPRINS Group's project "Immigrant Pupils at the Senior Level of Compulsory School and in Upper Secondary School", research and development work is being conducted concerning the educational situation of immigrant pupils and their prospects of becoming actively bilingual. Special attention is being paid to the teaching of home languages (mother tongue), Swedish (as second language), English and other linguistically demanding subjects.

The linguistic aspects of the educational route taken by immigrant pupils through compulsory school and upper secondary school up to the moment of their entry into employment are being studied in this project. This is being done by means of lesson analyses, interviews, follow-up of individual pupils and an experimental integrated language programme.

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## SCOPE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

### Background

The SPRINS Group (SPRINS is short in Swedish for "linguistic development of immigrant children in Sweden") at the Department of Linguistics, University of Göteborg, has since 1976 been conducting research and development work on the subject of immigrant children's linguistic development, schooling and attainment of active bilingualism. A full description of the SPRINS Group's activities, containing exhaustive bibliographical data, is contained in the project group reports published annually.(1)

As part of its total activities, SPRINS has devoted a great deal of interest to the teaching of immigrant students in upper secondary schools. One of the earliest reports in the series published by the SPRINS Group deals with the educational conditions of young immigrants who, owing to the brevity of their previous residence in Sweden, have only attended Swedish compulsory school for a few years and therefore need an induction course (ITK) of at least one year with intensive Swedish language training before they can begin their upper secondary schooling.(2) That SPRINS report has subsequently provided a serviceable basis for following up the ITK students' subsequent studies in upper secondary school.(3) In 1982, as part of the original SPRINS project, an extensive survey was undertaken of the teaching situation for immigrant pupils in upper secondary schools.(4) That survey led to the recommendation of an integrated language programme for immigrant students.

Between 1980 and 1982, SPRINS undertook an evaluation of the experimental scheme of adjusted time schedules (i.e. class structures such as home language class and composite class) at the junior and intermediate levels of compulsory school. Following the conclusion of this work, it came naturally for the SPRINS Group to expand its studies so as to include previous and subsequent levels, i.e. both pre-school education, the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school.

Where pre-school education is concerned, SPRINS is conducting the Home Language in Pre-School Education project and an experimental scheme of Swedish as a second language in pre-school education and at the junior level of compulsory school. As regards post-intermediate levels, SPRINS launched in 1983 the NBE-funded project Immigrant pupils at the senior level of compulsory school and in upper secondary school.

## Purpose

The main purpose of the Immigrant pupils at the senior level of compulsory school and in upper secondary school project is to chart, describe and evaluate the proficiency of immigrant languages in their first language (known in Swedish as the "home language") and in their second language, i.e. Swedish. This makes it interesting to study conditions at the end of compulsory schooling, during upper secondary school and on transition to the employment sector. There is good reason to hope that the project activities will substantially improve our insight concerning the proficiency and knowledge in and of their home language and Swedish which immigrant pupils should have in order to complete their schooling and subsequent education successfully and so as to obtain the jobs of their choice. The aim of the project is to gather knowledge on the content and quality of teaching, especially as regards home language and Swedish as second language. Knowledge of this kind is necessary in order to develop subject content and, accordingly, improve the teaching of both these languages of immigrant pupils.

## Follow-up of individual pupils

The survey, begun in 1980, of pupils attending the induction course for immigrant pupils (ITK) in Göteborg in 1977/78 and 1978/79[(2)] laid the foundations of comprehensive documentation concerning the educational progress of individual immigrant pupils from the senior level of compulsory school via the ITK course and upper secondary school to higher education or the employment sector. In addition to personal particulars (sex, year of birth etc.), the information collected about the pupils includes exhaustive documentation on their linguistic and

educational circumstances, primarily in Sweden but also in their countries of origin. Special attention has been devoted to the instruction received by the pupils in home language, Swedish, English and the characteristic subjects of their study programmes.

The original survey has gradually been augmented so as to include all pupils accepted for ITK in Göteborg between 1977 and 1985 (approximately 700 pupils from over 60 different countries). This material was collected by means of written questionnaires addressed to pupils and teachers and by interviewing all categories of school staff concerned. All documentation has been coded for data processing. Vital questions in the individualised follow-up are concerned with the pupils' choice of study programme and the reasons for their choices, the reasons why a strikingly large number of pupils discontinue or fail to begin upper secondary schooling, and the results of supportive Swedish language instruction. Nationality, previous schooling and linguistic background are a very important factor consistently related to the pupils' results/drop-out rates.

The individualised pupil follow-up will furnish unique material on the schooling of Swedish immigrant pupils and their prospects of becoming actively bilingual. The survey material may be specially interesting because, among other things, it includes the immigrant pupils taking part in the experimental integrated language programme.

Experimental integrated language programme

An integrated language programme, based on an extensive account of the educational situation of immigrant pupils in upper secondary school, is outlined in SPRINS Report No. 16/1982[4].

Analyses - both in SPRINS Report No. 16 and in other survey reports and articles - and, above all, many years' teaching experience convincingly show that immigrant pupils must be given Swedish language instruction based on their linguistic and cultural background and on their actual language learning situation. Where the overwhelming majority of

immigrant pupils are concerned, this is best accomplished through the deliberate teaching of a separate subject. Teachers of immigrant pupils have been advocating since the mid-1970s that the pupils should be taught their second language, Swedish, as a separate subject and that Swedish teaching in schools, accordingly, should be divided into two subjects, viz Swedish as first language/mother tongue, and Swedish as second language (previously termed Swedish as a foreign language). In 1979 this became the official NBE standpoint through the adoption of the internally compiled HINVA programme (HINVA being short in Swedish for "action programme for immigrant instruction"). The status of the subject, however, has not yet been defined by the authorities, and this is resulting in random, casual arrangements. Experimentation and subject development in the teaching of Swedish as second language are therefore really essential and will have a vital bearing on the organisation and pedagogical design of immigrant education.

Many immigrant pupils have been taught little if any English while attending school in their country of origin. English is a highly prestigious language of great importance, especially in juvenile culture, and all students are keen to study this language subject. Certain students, however, have great difficulty in coping with the English course in Swedish upper secondary schools, and because of their insufficient previous knowledge this presents a formidable third-language problem. As part of the integrated language programme, therefore, students are being given the opportunity of studying English in a special course, adapted to their previous knowledge and to their limited period of studies. If so, with a view to possible further education, they can continue their English studies after leaving upper secondary school. This is preferable to studying the subject at too high a level and too rapidly in school.

The immigrant students' mother tongue, known in Swedish as "home language", is under heavy pressure in upper secondary school. It is a voluntary subject of uncertain credential value in the employment sector. And so at present immigrant students may prefer, for tactical reasons (i.e. in order to obtain high marks), to include home language

in their study programmes. In order for home language studies to rank equally with other language subjects, the structure of home language will have to be more clearly defined as regards subject content, credential value and relation to other studies. One possible solution is for the subject to be geared to particular lines of study, so that as part of their home language studies students will be able, for example, to take Finnish business correspondence in the Economics Line and technical Spanish in the Technology Line. This should serve to give their knowledge of the mother tongue a definite credential value in the employment sector.

In spite of considerable difficulties, due partly to the NBE not sanctioning the award of marks for Swedish as second language, the experimental integrated language programme was able to start at Katrinelund Upper Secondary School, Göteborg, in the autumn term 1982. A report describing experience during the first three years has been published in the SPRINS series[5]. That report deals primarily with organisational aspects and effects and with head teachers', teachers' and students' experiences and impressions of the integrated programme. Subsequent work will to a great extent be concerned with efforts to develop the individual language subjects and to analyse learning conditions for immigrant students.

Seminars in the methodology of individual language subjects

The subject theory of Swedish as a second language has been included in teacher education since 1973, but the methodological side of teacher education for this subject has still hardly begun. Within the school system, the school management staff educationally responsible for immigrant instruction (directors of studies, immigrant advisers and corresponding officials) have been more than fully occupied with organisational matters. Because Swedish language instruction for immigrant pupils has been arranged on a supportive basis (very often with teachers of different categories who have been short of teaching periods or as a form of alternative service), no real subject development has materialised.

One of the essential features of the SPRINS Group's upper secondary school project is the methodology seminar for specially selected, experienced teachers of Swedish as second language. This seminar is conducting development work which will lead to a consistently thought-out scheme for the teaching of Swedish as second language in upper secondary schools. This methodology work can draw on experience of the experimental integrated language programme and also from the theoretical development on second language learning which is also resulting from other subsidiary activities within the upper secondary school project and other projects conducted by the SPRINS Group.

For several reasons, English cannot be developed as intensively as Swedish as second language, but the experience and opinions of teachers concerning English as second or third foreign language will be taken into consideration and viewed in relation to other components of the integrated language programme and with reference to the total teaching situation for immigrant pupils.

The uncertain position of home language as an upper secondary school subject amply justifies work on the development of its content and methods. Work of this kind has begun and will be conducted by home language teachers within the integrated language programme and apart from it. Central issues will include the extent to which home language as a subject can be geared to lines of study and the prospects of students' knowledge of home languages being potentially beneficial to their employment and educational prospects.

Conferences

In several of its projects, the SPRINS Group has arranged nationwide conferences, primarily for heads of department and other influential teachers concerned with immigrant instruction. This is prompted above all by the essential importance of two-way communication in school research. The researchers are dependent on direct contact with school management, teachers and other officers in order to gather relevant knowledge of the research field. At the same time it is really essen-

tial for the project to have opportunities of disseminating research findings to persons who can then pass on information about current R&D work to others concerned within the school system.

A conference organised as part of the upper secondary school project in the spring term 1985 was attended by some 200 head teachers, teachers and SYO (educational and vocational orientation) officers from 34 municipalities, including all the communities in Sweden with the largest immigrant populations. The purpose of this conference was to discuss the educational situation for immigrant students in upper secondary school. Special attention was paid to the transition from compulsory to upper secondary school and to the content of upper secondary school language teaching.(6) The conference included two plenary addresses on different teaching subjects and reports on research and development projects, as well as group discussions. The discussions were prepared in advance and were to a great extent guided by a detailed advance questionnaire in which the prospective participants were given an opportunity of actively helping to plan the conference in keeping with their own preferences and priorities. A follow-up questionnaire addressed to the conference participants served as a form of evaluation and an incentive for regional and local activities relating to the theme of the conference.

The experimental integrated language programme was part of the backbone of the conference. Other activities included an exhibition(7) and a video film(8), both jointly produced by researchers and teachers taking part in the upper secondary school project. During the concluding proceedings of the conference, a desire was expressed for the establishment of the SPRINS conference on a permanent basis in the form of a special immigrant education biennial. SPRINS is also planning to hold a winding-up conference on the project in 1987, because experience has shown conferences arranged in such a way as to require active efforts beforehand and afterwards by the specially selected delegates to be a highly effective means of collecting material and disseminating results. Resources permitting, other unconventional forms of reporting,

such as those which have already been used to a certain extent - the exhibition and video film - may come to be considered.

Separate conferences at regional level, attended by special target groups, are being planned for home language teachers and SYO officers. The intention is to collect material, launch development work and compile input documentation for evaluation purposes regarding both the status of home language as a subject and the subsequent educational and employment prospects of young immigrants.

Free study options at the senior level of compulsory school

A substudy organised in conjunction with a conference deals with free study options for immigrant pupils at the senior level of compulsory school. After statistical material have been collected from four selected municipalities with very large immigrant populations, the project team, acting in collaboration with the NBE and the Immigration Board, arranged a conference attended by representatives of the municipalities taking part and representatives of central authorities.

The survey and the summary of conference proceedings[9] make it quite clear that immigrant pupils tend far more often than Swedish pupils to opt for practical elective courses (instead of German and French, which affects their future options in upper secondary school). Relatively few immigrant students opt for home language, and the reason would seem to be by all accounts that this alternative is seldom presented by schools on equal terms with other elective courses.

The vocabulary of immigrant upper secondary school students

As part of the upper secondary school project, a special semantic-lexicographic survey is being made of the vocabulary in immigrant students' written work. Errors of vocabulary made by the students, above all as regards semantically important words, have been collected from standardised achievement tests, other essays and various kinds of written work.

The purpose of this survey is to chart the different types of error occurring in the vocabulary of immigrant students. This can facilitate a comparison with the lexicographical competence of Swedish students at the same age. One of the aims of the survey is to contribute towards a better insight concerning the way in which Swedish should be taught as a second language.

Upper secondary school as a linguistic environment

A separate survey will deal with upper secondary school as a linguistic environment. One of the main points of inquiry will be the language of textbooks and the effects of textbook language on immigrant students' understanding of the contents. The students' own written output will be compared with the written language of which they need a passive command in order to assimilate set reading.

In order to obtain a picture of the linguistic environment in the teaching situation, a number of lessons are being recorded, some of them in subjects which immigrant students find linguistically demanding, such as civics. These recordings will then be subjected to linguistic analysis. The observations of teaching materials and lessons will be related to the students' own testimony as it emerges from student questionnaires and in relation to interviews of teachers concerning the students' linguistic circumstances. Student questionnaires and teacher interviews will be selected so as also to convey a closer knowledge concerning certain of the students included in the individualised follow-up.

Finnish senior level classes

One of the SPRINS Group's projects is a survey of bilingual instruction for Finnish pupils at the senior level of compulsory school. This municipally funded project is an important supplement to the upper secondary school project, because it will help to chart conditions for immigrant pupils at senior level and to indicate how this should be

organised, designed and conducted in order to lay the best possible foundations for immigrant students' upper secondary schooling[10].

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